

Open With

Have you ever downloaded a file, went to open it, and ended up with a dialog box asking you what program you want to open the file with? What does it all mean? Glad you asked :-)



When this screen presents itself, it normally means one of three things (none of them particularly good).

1. You don't have a program on your computer to open up the file in question. Most programs automatically set up file associations when they are installed, so if you're getting this error, you may not have the software that is required to open the file. If that is the case, your next step is to figure out what kind of program you need to open the file then download / purchase it.
2. The file isn't meant to be opened. The majority of the files that live on our computers are either program files or files that support programs. So if you're just hunting around with Windows Explorer to see what you can open (mess up, play with, etc), you're probably going to be disappointed. Most of these type of files aren't really meant to be opened. In fact, if you do find a way to open them, they would probably look like gibberish.
3. The last possibility is that you do have a program on your machine that is capable of opening the file in question. Unfortunately, with all the different file formats floating around out there, it will be a guessing game trying to figure out what program can open a particular file. Normally I start with Windows Notepad. Many of the files on your computer are little more than text files that don't use the ".txt" extension. So, I scroll down the list on the Open With screen until I see NotePad.exe. I click that, hit Open, and see what happens.

OK, so what can you do?

If you get a file from someplace and aren't able to open it, your best bet is to contact the people who you received the file from and ask them what application (program) is used to open that type of file.

If that fails, try [this site \(click here\)](#). They have an enormous list of files and the type of program you need to open them.